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## EDITORIALS.

—THE International Geological Congress met at Zurich, commencing on August 29th, and continuing until September 1st, inclusive. On the third of September the Congress started on an extended excursion through the Alps for examination of the geological features en route. Numerous important papers were read, but no official expression as to rules or modes of procedure in geology were issued or discussed. The most important proposition in this direction had reference to the organization of the congress itself. Dr. Fraser of this city offered the following resolution, "with reference to the organization of the next congress." "(1) To what extent does the Congress recognize the right of Government bureaus as such, or of societies, or any other organization, to send delegates to the congress? (2) Within what limits does the Congress recognize the right of these representatives, or of a part only of the members of the Congress which come from the same country, to designate the Vice-President representing their country, or to act without coöperation with their compatriots in the Congress.?"

This resolution was rendered necessary by the arbitrary action of the president Prof. Renevier, in electing as Vice-President representing the United States, a person who was not present, but who had been recommended for the place by letter. The person so elected is a member of U. S. Geological Survey, and although this fact could not debar him from the position, his appointment under such circumstances brought into prominence the question as to the relative claims of various bodies to appointment to the official positions in the Congress. Since the Committee which originally represented the United States was driven out of existence, owing to the contributive neglect of some of its members, this country has no official representation in the Congress. Hence the propriety of the resolution offered by Dr. Fraser. An easy solution of the question would appear to be suggested by the language of the resolution. That is that the members in attendance from a given country, should get together in advance, and nominate their candidates for presentation to the congress.

—It is proposed by the Filson Club of Louisville, Kentucky, to publish a work on the life and writings of Constantine Samuel Rafinesque by the well known zoologist, Dr. R. Ellsworth Call. An extract from the preface says :

"This memoir had its inception in an attempt to clear up certain matters connected with the synonymy of a large and important group of fresh-water mollusks—the Unionidæ. A number of very remarkable facts connected with the personality of its subject were thus incidentally learned. As the collation of data proceeded, the facts learned seemed of sufficient importance to group them for presentation to the literary and scientific world in the hope that a better and more intelligent understanding of the work of this eccentric naturalist might result. A number of impressions were forced upon my attention as the work proceeded; among other conclusions reached, was the one that Rafinesque had not been always fairly treated by his cotemporaries. Resulting from this was the conviction that many naturalists now living have formed opinions concerning the nature and value of Rafinesque's work which appear to me to be quite erroneous. In the hope that some of these misapprehensions might be corrected, the task of writing his life, which is quite a labor of love, was undertaken."

The prospectus goes on to say "the publication will be in the sumptuous quarto form adopted by the Filson Club, and issued in paper only. It will contain several full page illustrations, one of which will be a portrait of its subject. A complete bibliography of the writings of Rafinesque on every subject, comprising over four hundred titles, will be included, together with a certified copy of his will, one of the most remarkable testamentary documents ever probated," etc.

The gentlemen engaged in this enterprise probably think that they are conferring a benefit on contemporary and future science by issuing this publication. We wish to state that in our opinion the money devoted to it might be expended in a much more profitable direction. A reprint of Rafinesque's botanical and zoological papers, so that they can be made accessible to students, would be far more useful to science, and we are glad to notice that the same publishers (Jno. P. Morton & Co.) propose to issue a reprint of the *Ichthyologia Ohiensis*. We do not mean to intimate, in making this suggestion, that the works of Rafinesque ever had more than a very moderate scientific value, but he has added so much to the nomenclature that it ought to be possible to refer easily to them, whereas now many of them are inaccessible to most naturalists.

Rafinesque is well known as a most careless writer who inflicted endless difficulties on his successors. Some of the matter of his papers is fictitious, and much of it of such an indefinite character that it should not be admitted into scientific literature. Some naturalists have been at great pains to identify his species, but such identifica-

tions will be ultimately set aside, when a more critical spirit prevails among species zoologists. Money is so badly needed for scientific research and its publication, that it is melancholy to notice its perversion to such an object. It is also difficult to understand how any one who understands the true needs of science can devote his time to writing such a book. In concluding these remarks, we wish to emphasize the fact that Mr. Rafinesque was not a Kentuckian, nor an American, so that patriotic (!) motives can scarcely enter into the proposition.

—It is greatly to be hoped that the newly established Botanical Society of America can be induced to hold at least some of its meetings at the same times and places as the societies of Naturalists, Morphologists and Physiologists, for not a few will be members of more than one of these organizations, while there are many questions like those of evolution, heredity, geographical distribution, studies of the cell and of protoplasm, which, whether presented from the zoological or the botanical side are of equal interest to all. We notice that the provisions of the constitution of the new society are in effect that annual and special meetings are to be held at times and places appointed by the council, so that there is, in this respect, no trouble in affiliation with the older organizations.

—PROFESSOR W. W. NORMAN of De Pauw University goes to the place in the University of Texas recently vacated by C. L. R. Edwards, now of Cincinnati. In view of the treatment experienced by Dr. Edwards, the position can hardly be said to be a desirable one, and we withhold our congratulations until we see whether the university authorities know more or are more sensible of the advances of science than they were a few months ago. The best we can do is to extend our sympathies.

The numbers of the *American Naturalist* for 1894 were issued at the following dates: January, Jan. 25; February, Feb. 17; March, Mch. 8; April, Apl. 2; May, May 4; June, June 1; July, July 13; August, Aug. 14; September, Sept. 15; October, Oct. 10; November, Nov. 8; December, Dec. 5.